

Abstract 390

TITLE: Sexual Empowerment/Powerlessness and HIV Risk Among Women

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: This presentation will draw on a study designed to assess the relationship between women's perceptions of sexual empowerment/powerlessness and their safer sex practices (i.e., condom use and sexual negotiation) with main and nonmain partners.

METHODS: Women who had participated in HIV counseling, and testing programs (N=122) were assessed via self-administered survey on demographics. Social Cognitive Theory predictors of HIV (i.e., risk level, safer sex social norms, and self-efficacy) Self-in Relation Theory predictors of HIV (i.e., partner attitudes toward condoms, anticipated partner reaction to safer sex negotiation), sexual empowerment/powerlessness (i.e., perceived sexual empowerment/powerlessness, history of sexual abuse), and their safer sex practices. Pearson correlation analyses will be used to identify significant associations between predictor variables and dependent variables (i.e., consistency of condom use and safer sex negotiation with main and nonmain partners). Linear regression analysis will be used to identify how much variance in the dependent variables the model comprised on significant correlates accounts for.

RESULTS: Preliminary results indicate that consistent condom use with main partners was not the norm among this sample. Only 27.5% of women used condoms consistently with their main partner; 53.2% never used condoms with their main partner. Even though more women reported condom use with non-main partner, 23.8% never used condoms with their nonmain partners. Sexual empowerment was low among this sample; 43.4% did not feel in control of their sex life. Further, 63.9% had a history of being sexually coerced, and 35.2% reported having been raped. Results of correlation and regression analyses will be presented and discussed.

CONCLUSIONS: Findings of this study can be used to develop HIV intervention programs tailored to the needs of female counseling and testing clients.

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